

The Codes We Live By

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The Codes We Live By

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Summary

"Why am I here?"

"Have something against Madagascar?" Teague did not turn to face him.

"You know what I mean." Norrington leaned on the balcony alongside him. "There's no love lost between our families. Why did you bring me back? Why am I here?"

Notes

So... back after AWE came out I meant to write a long Sparrington fic, but all that ever came out of it was a drabble series. And I don't seem to have ever posted them anywhere except a long dead LJ account. Not sure how that happened. Since I'm catching up with crossposting, I decided I really should remedy that.

Irony

Teague Sparrow was not a man to be trifled with. He'd lived a long, fierce life on the seas and could deal out death and mercy alike without blinking an eye. Even the pirate lords that formed the Brethren Court looked upon him with a great deal of awe and not a little fear.

They, however, were not temperamental sea goddesses whom he was trying to extract an old favor from.

"Seems to me what the Keeper of the Pirate Codex is needing is, ironically, a Pirate Hunter. And it just so happens I have one - in Davy Jones's Locker..."

Personal Demons

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The Chanson Des Sang had found its watery grave on the ocean bottom over ten years ago. Long before the man he was seeking had become famous among the Brethren as a deadly and persistent Pirate Hunter. So to find his Locker composed of endless sea and the ship of the late, unlamented Captain Ramage was unexpected.

The sound of the whip and Ramage's voice drew his attention. "Play, I said! You know the consequences of disobedience!"

Fiddle music, raw with pain and silenced by his gunshot.

Haunted green eye met his. "This isn't how it happened."

"I reckon not."

Chapter End Notes

Chanson Des Sang is badly translated French for Song of Blood.
Ramage is equally badly translated French for Birdsong.

So over ten years ago I read a fic where Norrington played the violin, and I was like, headcanon accepted, though I ended up changing it to a fiddle for The Codes We Live By. But, as no surprise to anyone who knows me, I can't remember what fic it was. (I can never remember fic names - I'm always like "it involved this one awesome scene like this. Title? No clue.") I haven't found that fic yet to give credit where credits due. So if by chance you're reading this, your fic was amazing and I've never gotten the idea out of my head that Norrington would be musically inclined.

Prey and Hunter

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Why am I here?"

"Have something against Madagascar?" Teague did not turn to face him.

"You know what I mean." Norrington leaned on the balcony alongside him. "There's no love lost between our families. Why did you bring me back? Why am I here?"

"The elephant trampled the lion's cub. The father knew, but killed nine goats instead."

"What are you talking about?"

"Respect. Prey. And Hunters." Teague turned to look at him pointedly. "I'm too old to chase disrespectful whelps who think they can break the code whenever they see fit. I need a hunter, savvy?"

"...Find someone else."

Chapter End Notes

Teague's line in Prey and Hunter is something I once read on a Magic the Gathering Card - "I will tell my father's stories. How the elephant trampled the lion's cub. And the father, though he knew, killed nine goats instead." It came to mind, and just seemed... very Teague.

Bloody Calypso...

It wasn't that Jack didn't enjoy seeing old friends. Even when said old friend was someone he was somewhat responsible for getting the heart cut out of. Still, young Mr Turner - oops, forgot - young Captain Turner did look a good deal better than last he'd seen him and not at all mad at him either. For now. And he'd been rather pleased to see him as well. Until he'd explained why he was there.

"I ain't going to Madagascar."

"Calypso said-"

"There isn't anything she could say that would make me go there, savvy?"

The dingy started leaking.

"Bloody Calypso..."

In Your Blood

"C'mon, Admiral. Ain't it your duty to insure the seas are safe?"

"I'm not an Admiral!"

"Preferred Commodore? It does roll off the tongue better."

"...I'm not a Commodore. I'm not even a Captain. I don't have a ship."

"Ah, but that can be arranged. After all, this nuisance we're after must have a ship. No reason you couldn't commandeer it for your own."

"You're wasting your time, Sparrow. The Pirate Hunter died on the Dutchman. I'm done with the sea."

Jack's eyes narrowed. "You aren't, mate."

"I am."

"The sea's in your blood. There's no being done with that."

Family

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The music was raw. Sorrow and pain. Regret. Shattered dreams, and broken ideals. It was James.

And, no, he wasn't going to question when his mind had started calling him by his given name.

Anymore than he was going to question why the man sat down next to him when he finished the song.

"Fitzwilliam is your cousin." Which wasn't, in retrospect, what he'd meant to say. But then, comments on the beauty of his music seemed inane. And offering a shoulder to cry on was out of the question.

"My family disowned him."

"Did you?"

"Never. He disowned me."

Chapter End Notes

Never read any of the books. Just picking bits and bobs for convenience.

Sounds Like Fun

"You're not going to the galley, are you?"

Though it wasn't his intended destination, Jack turned back to Norrington with a frown, blinking owlishly in the lantern light. "Reason I shouldn't?"

"It's... occupied."

"Not exactly a shock. It being the galley and all."

"No. I mean, two of your father's crew are currently... abusing the 29th."

Jack nearly asked '29 what?' until he noticed the blush darkening the other man's face. Then he caught his meaning. "Oh. Tugging like monkeys, eh? I do hope they aren't using the table."

"No, a bench. Use being a relative term."

"Sounds like fun."

Prelude to the Pirate Hunter

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"What happened on the Chanson Des Sang?"

For a moment Jack wasn't certain if James would answer. When he finally spoke his voice was distant with memory. "I learned to hate pirates."

"Prelude to the Pirate Hunter?"

James' lips twisted wryly. "The Pirate Hunter was once a midshipman - and his captain's favorite fiddler."

"And Pirate Captain Ramage fancied himself a music lover."

"No playing for Ramage - my Captain's final orders to me. But what price a song? A Captain's life? A fellow crewman's? One a day. Until I gave in."

"And then?"

James's laugh was pained. "He killed them all."

Chapter End Notes

A little additional information from the fic these drabbles were based on that I never got to writing, the full angsty details of the backstory in this chapter (which occurred pre-canon) goes like this:

James was playing the fiddle for the crew right before they ship was attacked and sunk by the Chanson Des Sang. Ramage had heard the music across the water, and wanted whoever it was to play for him. So most of the crew was captured alive, seeing as he wasn't sure who the fiddler was. The captured Navy captain's standing order was for nobody to tell Ramage anything, and for James to not play the fiddle for him. But until the person came forward and played, Ramage killed a member of the crew a day, including the Captain. As the days wore on, though, the captured crew began to turn on James - blaming him for the daily deaths. Unable to take the hatred and accusations being thrown at him from his own crew, he finally gave in and played. Having gotten what he wanted, though, Ramage simply killed the rest of the crew. James was kept alive, and rescued only one day later - meaning if he had obeyed the order and kept refusing, some of the crew would have lived. Which, of course, he blamed on himself and his failure to follow orders almost as much as he blamed the pirates who'd captured them.

Considering he was set against piracy before he even got to the Caribbean, it definitely felt like his reasons had to be personal. And this backstory worked well with this fic because in the end I needed James to be able to still be the Pirate Hunter - as that was what Teague brought him back to do for him.

Abusing the 29th

James opened his eyes when he felt lips brush against his neck, accompanied by the trickle of a mustache and one of a pair of braids brushing against his shoulder. He paused, not responding but not protesting, and the lips settled into the hollow behind his ear - warmer; more insistent.

"Jack, what are you doing?" His voice was soft to his own ears. He decided not to think about that. Or the fact he'd called him by his first name.

Lips curved into a smile against his skin. Trilled fire across his jaw. "Abusing the 29th. Should I stop?"

"...No."

Beyond Imagining

It wasn't anything like he'd imagined. Which wasn't a bad thing. But the few times he had thought about it he'd expected it to be fast. Harsh, even, given the conflicts they'd shared. A battle. But given that they lived lives filled with violence, it made sense that neither of them felt the need to make a battlefield of their bed.

It was languid kisses. Gentle hands mapping out curves and angles. Fingers dancing across sensitive skin. It was drawn out moans and sinuous chuckles. The burning heat of impassioned flesh; liquid fire inside of him. Release. Silence. Beyond imagining.

Morning After

He soaked in the feeling of the warm body fit tightly against his. Savored the curve of the long neck his face was buried in, the tickling of feather soft hair against his skin. The comfort of holding onto someone.

His arm was pulled away from the waist he'd been holding, and he prepared for the loss of the warm body next to him. Instead his wrist was turned up, and gentle fingers traced the P branded into his wrist.

"Does it bother you?"

"No would be a lie."

"Ramage's legacy?"

"So it would seem."

"I'm not him."

"I know."

Mending Bridges

"How did you end up here?" James watched as his cousin patched the longboat's side, his work slowed by the damaged leg that had ended his naval career.

"Nowhere near as dramatically as you did." Fitzwilliam's answer was flippant.

"You were working for the East India Trading Company. What happened?"

"You could make yourself useful and hand me that board, you know."

Resisting the urge to hit him with the board instead, James complied.

"It was Teague who rescued you from the Locker?"

"It was."

"Then I guess I can't regret rescuing his son from the East India Trading Company."

Left Behind

"Where is he?"

Teague didn't look up from tuning his gitar. "Doing what he does best. Hunting pirates."

"You sent the Pirate Hunter out on your ship, with a crew of pirates what know who he is?"

"The Pirate Hunter, is it?" Teague looked up, smirking. "When I passed by your room last night things between you two didn't sound so formal. In fact they sounded rather... friendly."

Jack told himself not to react like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar. Hear that face? No blushing. "He's still the Pirate Hunter, savvy?"

"I savvy. Do you?"

The Correct Answer

"Jack, are you sleeping with my cousin?"

Considering his vast experience in such matters, Jack knew how to appropriately answer such a question. Just the first six words alone made the correct answer "no" regardless of the truth. After all, no word one ended the sentence with made it less incriminating. Brother. Sister. Daughter. Husband. Lover. Goat. No, no word could end that question to make it safe to answer yes to.

But the years of experience seemed to drop away as he gazed into Fitzwilliam's green eyes - almost identical to his absent lover's. "And if I said I was?"

Victory

He feared he might freeze up. The confidence he'd felt when he'd demanded The Odyssey and her crew off of Teague evaporated once they weighed anchor. Was he still the Pirate Hunter? Could he still fight? Could he command a crew of pirates without getting himself killed?

Apparently his reputation worked for, not against, him. The crew jumped to obey his orders as if in fear of their lives. It relieved, amused, and annoyed him in turn.

His other fears were swept away in the battle. The roar of cannons. The dance of his blade. In blood; death; life. Victory.

What Counts

"Cutting out on the festivities early?"

James hesitated at the door to his quarters. "I wasn't missed."

"You're the hero of the hour, mate. I think they'll notice."

"Not my meaning."

"So, that's what's eating you. Look, your navy boys don't deal much with sea goddesses and magic, now do they?"

"Not in the same way pirates and the East India Trading Company seem to."

"Take some advice from Captain Jack Sparrow on this one. Who brought you back; for what reason don't matter. Fairweather friends or enemies. Selfishness or guilt. What counts is you're back, and whatever comes next."

Roscoe

James watched warily as the two aged men brought the giant tome into the hall to set on the table. Teague whistled, and a dog bounded in, carrying a set of keys. A very familiar dog. "Roscoe?"

Having given the keys over, Roscoe bounded over to James. Teague snorted. "Likes you, eh? Have to remember that."

"I used to feed him."

"He's got a weakness for tablescraps."

"He also chases chickens."

Teague looked at him. "Hang many chickens in Port Royal?"

"The fort had a rooster."

"Not too particular about its chickens and roosters? You seem to collect that sort."

Time to Leave

"So, what did Da want?"

James was still holding the fiddle when he sat down next to him. "It seems that the position of Pirate Codex Enforcer is currently unfilled."

Jack couldn't remember when it had last been filled, but opted against mentioning it. "So, what's the problem? Not hunting pirates, obviously."

James chuckled. "No."

"Working with pirates, maybe?"

Setting aside the fiddle, he pulled his arm to him - fingers seeking the P branded into his skin and tracing it. "Jack, do you trust your father?"

"...I trust a dishonest man to do something dishonest."

"Exactly."

"Time we left then."

An Act of Piracy?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"I'm having second thoughts." James confessed. He was holding onto the side of the ship, water dripping off his frame.

"Too late for those, luv." Jack, equally as wet, dragged him onboard.

"You sure we aren't being too rash?"

"By committing an act of piracy?"

"By stealing one of your father's ships."

"Which is an act of piracy."

"You're still the worst pirate I've ever seen."

"Present company excluded, of course."

James huffed, and Jack kissed him.

Later, when he found the fiddle in the captain's cabin, James wondered if being permitted to steal a ship was still considered piracy.

Chapter End Notes

This is where the original fic ended. There was supposed to be a sequel where they went on an adventure together to get the Black Pearl back. During which James would end up (be tricked into *cough*) accepting working for Teague. But I don't have any drabbles currently written for that one. Though I did have an angsty smut one shot from the sequel written I might post later.

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